

The LORD is good to everyone and everything; God's compassion extends to all his handiwork! (Psalm 145:9)

Calling the Disciples – Matthew 4:18-22

Prepare to Wonder

This story is an invitation to choose discipleship of acceptance and inclusion. We often consider Jesus' calling of the disciples as a command rather than a question. However, the end of the Scripture actually says, "Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him." The men were called, but they had a choice to answer and accept that calling. They chose to leave what they knew and to become followers of Jesus.

The story also says that Jesus fishes for people. To fish for people is Jesus calling each of us to truly follow him. This is a calling for everyone. When we accept this calling, we are invited to be disciples and to share this message with the world. The United Methodist mission statement says: "The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Followers of Christ help others discover and come to know God through the example of Jesus. Everyone is invited to be part of this message and to share this invitation with others.

Everyone is called. Regardless of status, race, gender, or any other identity, we all can be followers of Jesus Christ. However, we must choose and accept the life of discipleship. When we choose to be a disciple, we get to help build a community in which everyone is included, bringing all of God's children together.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Have you ever felt called to do something, but you didn't feel equipped or qualified? What did you do? How did you respond? It's a choice to answer a calling, and it can be hard. This week find a rock or a stone. Hold it tight and consider where you are being called. Say the following prayer: "God, who calls us all, it can be hard to follow you. Help me remember I can choose to be included in your vision to share your love with the whole world. Amen."

Welcome to Wonder

Supplies: CEB Bible, Annual Music CD or song download, optional: Digital Class Pack

- Gather together near your Wonder Table.

SAY: Today's faith word is *include*.

- Show the children the "Include" poster (Digital Class Pack).

SAY: When we include, we welcome all of God's children in God's love.

SING together

- Use your Annual Music CD or download the song, "Welcome" (<https://www.cokesbury.com/Celebrate-Wonder-Annual-Music>).
- Play the song, "Welcome." Sing and celebrate.

Wonder with Me

Supplies: CEB Bible, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, optional: Wonder Cube (Digital Class Pack)

READ the Bible Story

- Read the Bible story, Matthew 4:18-22.
- Roll the Wonder Cube. Take time to answer a few of the questions.

WATCH the Bible Story

- Visit <https://www.cokesbury.com/Celebrate-Wonder-Video> to download and watch today's Bible story, or watch on www.amplifymedia.com.

WONDER together

- Can anyone follow Jesus?
- Who do you know that follows Jesus?
- What would you have done if you had been one of the fishermen, and Jesus asked you to follow him?

CONTINUE to Wonder

- How does the church community help you follow Jesus?
- Where do you think the disciples and Jesus went immediately after Jesus asked them to follow him?

PRAY together

- Dear God, help me to show your love and to include everyone. Amen.

Experience Wonder—Fishing for Snacks (Snack)

Supplies: shallow bowl, fish-shaped crackers, small paper cups, napkins

Prepare Ahead: Pour the fish-shaped crackers into the shallow bowl.

- Give each child a small paper cup and a napkin.
- Have the children take turns dipping their cups in the bowl for fish-shaped crackers and pouring the crackers on their napkins.

SAY: Jesus invited the disciples to fish for people, but he didn't really mean to use a net or a fishing pole. What he wanted them to do was tell people about Jesus and invite them to be followers.

ASK: What is something you could tell someone about Jesus that might make that person want to follow Jesus?

- Give the children time to answer.

WONDER: How can we share Jesus with people through our actions?

Tip: Always check for allergies when serving food to the children.

Spiritual Practice—Exploring Inclusion Through Community

- Gather the children in a circle.

PRAY: Please join me in saying these special words about following Jesus:

Jesus said to come and follow,
so that is what the disciples did.
I am also important and included.
I will follow him.
Amen.

- Encourage the children and their families to use the Celebration Chart (Digital Class Pack) and to read together the *Winter 2020–21 Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book* (if purchased) at home this week.